1:Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

40% of the proceeds. The trees thus sold are all cut down. After clearcutting, the area is left to natural reseeding. About twenty years hence, the clearing will again be sufficiently forested to permit repetition of the same procedure. This follows an established Japanese pre-war practice. This was known as the five year period share (gonenkanbun). The forest is divided into subdivisions, each 110 chō in area. (A chō is 2.45 acres). These 110 chō plots are in turn subdivided into five parcels of twenty-two chō each. Each year one of these five subdivisions may be cleared.

Throughout the forest, divided up into these plots, there may be a five year cycle of cutting, but not all the plots are available every year. If this were so, the forest could be cut over in five years. The system is planned so that there will always be parcels being cleared, those in various stages of regrowth, and mature stands. During and after the war, this practice broke down in favor of uncontrolled cutting.

If a family has little cash, a villager may pay his taxes in part by cutting wood. The village office pays Y4 for a bundle of firewood (late 1951), Y2 going to the villager as a cash payment, and Y2 being applied to his taxes for the year.

The farmer makes frequent excursions to the mountains to obtain firewood or poles to make improvements in the compound, such as repairing a tool or food shed. Men do this work, especially when the distances are far, but the participation of women is by no means exceptional. Along the roads of northern Okinawa, one can frequently see old women walking down from the mountains carrying bundles of firewood on heavy poles. Much of the wood is hand carried from the mountains; if the farmer has a horse and cart or a truck, the wood is carried to a convenient road for loading and transport.

Charcoal is manufactured in the forest area. In Okinawa charcoal has many uses, mainly for heating and cooking, and for charcoal sticks (senko). Lumps of charcoal are placed in braziers and the sticks are used as touchwood in place of matches and in ceremonial and religious observances. Charcoal containers (tangu) are often constructed on the spot. These are round or box-shaped and made out of the dwarf bamboo.

Charcoal kilns are privately owned. They are of the simplest sort. The kiln may be covered with a rude housing, built up by poles and a thatch roof. A mound of large boulders and dirt is built with an opening on the dirt floor running the length of the firing area. Poles which have been stripped and cut in various lengths, from five to nine feet, are shoved in the opening and moved forward as they burn. The smoke comes out the back.

Forest maintenance and improvement is, in part, a result of community endeavor. With some exceptions, each person in the village from 16 to 60 participates one day a year in forest improvement (sōrin).[8] The participants are boys past school age, unmarried girls, and all men up to the age of 60. These people work without personal remunera-

[8] The usual meaning of sōrin is afforestation or reforestation. In Matsuda it is used in the sense of care and improvement of the forest.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

By the 7th day, the reminders of New Year have been cleared away. The old offerings are taken from the god shelf and replaced by new food. The rice straw rope, if any, has been removed. 527

Of all the holidays New Year is the most eagerly anticipated and the most varied in its activities. It combines ideas of renewal and new beginnings with worship of the dead and of the founders of the village, as well as being a means of making closer ties with more distant relatives of the extended family. It is a time of work and some pleasure for the women, a time of relaxation and drinking for the men.

2

Jūrokunichi

The second public holiday, Jūrokunichi (literally 16th day) is on the 16th day of the 1st lunar month (February 21, 1951). This is a holiday of devotion and prayer at the family tomb. Worshippers go singly or in a group. The tomb is cleaned and food is left for the dead. 769 [796]

In Hanashiro, food is taken in two lacquer boxes (jūbako) the first of which contains rice cakes, the second, fritters, meat, bean curd, and other food depending on the resources of the family. For the first observance after death, two boxes are taken on this holiday. On succeeding anniversaries only the box containing the fritters, meat, bean curd and other foods is taken.[1] The purpose of this offering is to comfort the dead. The food, usually with tea and sake, is left before the tomb for about two hours and taken home, where it is eaten. (Offerings at tombs or at home are only temporary; later they are removed and eaten as ordinary food). The lacquer boxes may also be taken on New Year, at the spring equinox, and at O-Bon. [262] [415]

In Minatogawa, descendants of the former nobility or gentry (shisoku) take four boxes, two of rice cakes, two of the miscellaneous foods, while descendants of commoners take two boxes, one of the rice cakes, and one of the assortment. Every year the same offering is made. It is not reduced to one box after the first. In Matsuda, any kind of a flower is placed by the tomb. A lacquer box with food is prepared for all who died during the preceding year, but it remains on the god shelf in the house and is not taken to the tomb. The contents of the two boxes are as previously described. On succeeding anniversaries after the first, plates instead of lacquer boxes are used. [565] [262]

1 The idea behind this is not clear. Possibly in the first year the dead person requires more food and comfort than in succeeding ones. As they do with so many other practices, most Okinawans explain it by saying that it is shikan (the custom).

3

Celebrations Through the Festival of the Fifth Month

796 The 15th day of the second lunar month (March 22, 1951) is the Buddhist holiday, higan, celebrating the spring equinox. Here it is a home festival of thanksgiving. Barley (ōmugi) or barley cakes [262] with brown sugar are offered with prayers for continued good fortune. Other grains, such as rice, millet (awa) may be offered, though the cakes (mūgimochi) are of barley. In Hatsuda, this is not a house ceremony. An offering of white rice cakes is made by the village [993] head man, with the assistance of lower orders of the former priestess system, at the site of the village patron deity.

527 The third day of the third month is the festival of the dolls, (hinamatsuri). It is not important in Okinawa and is spottily ob- [524] served. In Hinatogawa, it is a woman's holiday. Women and children [562] make dolls. Gifts of dainties and candies in red lacquer boxes are prepared. People from nearby villages come to Hinatogawa, bring their lunches, and gather shells and catch fish.

The fifth day of the fifth month is Boy's Day. This Japanese holiday is not significant in the villages. There may be banners with a picture of a carp (koi no bori) displayed, visits to the place of the patron deity, some visiting and samisen playing, and perhaps a play.

527 The 14th day of the 5th month (June 18, 1951) is the festival 526 of the Gods of the Sea and is observed only in Hinatogawa. It is this village's greatest celebration. The boat race, held on this day, attracts many from the interior villages. In Hanashiro, most activity ceases while everyone goes to the boat races. Before the [998] races, the villagers go to the religious sites to make small offerings [982] and to pray. The races are held in the estuary of the river. In their excitement, children with infants on their back often wade out in the water to cheer their favorite boat.

796 The Festival of the Fifth Month (Gogatsumatsuri) is held on the 15th day of the 5th lunar month (June 19, 1951). Like the festival of the spring equinox, it is a day of thanksgiving. Thanks are given for rice [993] instead of for barley. In Hatsuda, the ceremony is conducted by the village head man and former members of the priestess system.[2]

2 According to a Hatsuda informant, women should not sew on this [114] day. It is a rest day. If work is done, including gathering [805] plants for fertiliser, the dreaded poisonous snake, the habu, will come. These customs were not encountered in the other villages.

1:Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

4

O-Bon

The festival of O-Bon takes place on the 15th and 16th of the 7th lunar month (August 17-18, 1951), or from the 13th to the 16th, if preliminary preparations are included.[3] This very important holiday lacks the variety of themes which appear in the celebration of New Year. O-Bon is a festival to entice the spirits of the dead to their earthly home, and then, what is just as important, to induce them, after their visit, to return to the other world. O-Bon is an occasion for extended family reunions.

Generally on the 7th day of the month, about a week before O-Bon, the family or representatives of the family visit the tombs, take an offering of sake, and clean up around the tomb. At this time, the dead are asked to come back on O-Bon. This is the tanabata matsuri.[4]

On the evening of the 13th, two candles are placed within the compound entrance to guide the spirits back. This act of welcome is known as unke or omukaebi.

In Hanashiro, on the 15th there are prayers and offerings to the dead. Candles are then relit at the compound entrance and the spirits beseeched to return to the afterworld (ukui in Okinawan, okuribi in Japanese, meaning sending back). This may also be done on the 16th. Members gather at the home of the head of the house of the main family. The 16th is passed in rest and recreation. In Hinatogawa, observing the holiday may require a visit to Itoman. The Hatsuda custom is like that of Hanashire.

O-Bon is a colorful holiday. Lanterns are freely used. Whether the people believe that the spirits of the dead return is a question to which there is no easy answer. Many observe the formalities and the customs of O-Bon without believing that the spirits have actually returned. There is formal compliance, but in my opinion real belief is to be found mostly among women of middle age and older.

3 O-Bon has been variously translated as "The Lantern Festival," "Festival of the Dead," "All Souls Day," but I prefer here to retain the Japanese word, as these translations are only misleading approximations.

4 For an interesting discussion of the origin of tanabata in Japan, see Chamberlain, Things Japanese, 436-37. In Okinawa one occasionally hears this referred to as a "star festival."

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

4

Ancestor Worship

"Ancestor worship" has been used to describe the devotion to the spirit of the dead and the long continued remembrance of them by the living. While it is too deeply intrenched to be changed, the term is not satisfactory. It is really the worship of those who precede one in death, and these may be ascendants or descendants. The term, "ancestor worship," also conceals the fact that there is a partnership of the living and the dead, which, continued by the living generation in the production of children, will carry over in the future, so that family continuity from the remote past to the remote future is never broken. It is, in the phrase of John Hubbard, "a chain of worship,"[2] not merely the worship of the past and of the dead. But whether in the popular mind these two conceptions, worship of the dead and the family as a continuity, are closely and consciously related is impossible for me to say. The two ideas exist side by side on the level of feeling: to respect one's ancestors and to have children.

Another form of ancestor worship occurs in observances honoring the first ancestor or the founder of the village. Each village has a place of the guardian god (ujigami), located on the supposed site where the founder of the village first settled, which perpetuates the memory of the founder, who may, in some cases, also be the first ancestor of a family living in the village. (It has been suggested that the ujigami also might be related historically to the fire deity). Ceremonies at the place of the village guardian god have a public character and were often conducted by the priestesses.

Hanashiro. The place of the guardian god, a small building, is located on a plot of village owned land, off the main road at the edge of the settlement where the cultivated land begins. It is not well kept up. There is no attendant or caretaker. When necessary, it is reconstructed by volunteer village effort. Broken stone stairs lead up to the small tile roofed building. Inside, there are 5 stones, about 10 inches on the side and 4 inches thick. Some have thought these also represent the primitive hearth stones associated with worship of the fire god. One villager described it as a woman's deity place. Before the war, emigrants to the South Seas, South America, Manchuria, or Japan and their relatives prayed here for the good health and early return of those departing.

Now there is public worship at the place on several occasions during the year. On the 3rd day of the 3rd month, a woman's holiday, women and children go to the seashore around Minatogawa, and, on returning, pray at the place of the guardian god. On O-Bon, the village lion appears in front of this site. There is sanisen playing and the whole village offers a prayer. (Not all villages have the lion costume.

2 Quoted in L. Cranmer-Byng, The vision of Asia, New York, 1933, 42.

778 796 536 825 One person in front fills in the head and forelegs, another in back provides the rear and hindlegs. The lion, with its human mechanism, is a common sight at festivals and parades. It is a symbol of health and strength worthy of imitation). In the Festival of the Full Moon, during the autumnal equinox, the lion appears again and the whole village participates in prayers before the festivities begin.

778 796 764 [825] On the 1st and 15th of each lunar month, the headman goes to the place of the guardian god and makes an offering of tea, burns a charcoal stick, and says a prayer. On the 9th day of the 9th lunar month, the village council and the elders assemble before the village burial palanquin (gan), offer prayer at the founder's site and then before the village office where the lion is standing.

Minatogawa. This village has three deity places and various explanations are given for this. Some believe that two of them represent sites of co-founders, a first son, and his younger brother, the second son. The third site is vaguely known as a village god place. It is a small outdoor place of worship on the main village road, with a step and a shelf for charcoal sticks. The founders' sites are located in the center of the settled area, but on different sides of the road. In the site of the second son, there are three stones, shaped like life savers but with a bottom for placing the charcoal sticks, three glasses for tea, and three bottles. The site of the supposed first son, less well kept, has a small altar, four stones, tea cups, and cans for the burning of incense.

778 796 [782] [358] On New Year and at O-Bon, the whole, or substantial portions, of the village pray first at the supposed first son's site, then at the second son's. Prayers are offered also at the roadside deity place. Some of the younger villagers hope that as the older residents die off, the expenses of providing offerings and upkeep for all three can be eliminated and that simpler observances can take place at the roadside shrine. The situation now is complicated by the fact that many people regard themselves as descendants of one or the other co-founder.

778 184 [993] Matsuda. In this village, the founder's site is reached by stairs leading up a hillside. It is in the settled area near a dense growth of trees and shrubs. Close by there is a shed in which the lion skin is kept. In this village the founder's site seemed less important than another religious place, on the main road, in which women of lesser rank in the former priestess system participate in ceremonies. In this village there seems to be less participation by all the people of the village at the place of the guardian or founder deity, and, instead, representatives, like the headman, elders, and the former priestesses conduct the ceremonies at New Year, O-Bon, and at the equinoctial holidays. [796]

The group sat in a circle. The priestess occupied the highest spot, her female assistants somewhat lower places, and the men, for once, in the lowest position. The priestess, her women and the male entourage held public worship on the 15th day of the 5th, the 15th and 16th day of the 6th, and the 10th day of the 8th lunar months. On these days there were prayers for good crops, for freedom from disasters and typhoon damage. On the 10th day of the 8th month, there were special prayers that neither diseases nor epidemics enter Hatsuda. These three periods may be rest days on which the villagers may assemble at the place where the prayers are being offered. Because there is no priestess, these ceremonies are now conducted by former assistants. The meetings are attended by fewer and fewer people and the ceremonies may disappear altogether.

6

Gods of the Fire, Wells, and Sacred Groves

There are also other forms of worship which still survive. These are (1) the god of fire (hi no kami), (2) spirits of the sea, of wells, springs, and groves, and (3) types of fortune telling which blend into religious belief.

Gods of the Fire. In every Okinawan kitchen, there is a place above the stove or hearth dedicated to the kitchen or the fire god. There is no image or personification of the god. Usually the place is a very small shelf on which charcoal sticks are burned for the god of the hearth. This is done by women exclusively. The women may light the sticks daily, but it is more usual for the housewife to perform the observance on the 1st and 15th of the lunar month. This was true of all the villages, and I have never seen a kitchen which lacked a place for the fire god.[7]

Gods of the Well (ido no kami). In Hanashiro, prayers are offered in front of the two public wells on lunar New Year. The whole village does not participate. Two or three older men from each extended family perform the rite. The gods of the well are told that the villagers need water; they are thanked for what they have had, and asked to continue to furnish a plentiful supply.

7 The Shinto god shelf (kamidana) is extremely rare. In my observation, it was present only in the homes of Okinawans who had lived in Japan. One in Hatsuda, located in the first room, had two shelves, on both of which a small urn for burning incense sticks was placed between two flower vases. The place on the left represents the founder, the one on the right, his immediate descendant. The family prays to the Shinto god on the 1st and 15th of the lunar month. The husband and wife pray first, followed by the children. A rice offering is placed on the shelf. On it there was a small figurine of the fox god (inari-san) and a mirror, both Shinto symbols.

Similar worship may take place at a spring (izumi). Near Gushichan village there is a large spring. Stone stairs have been built up, amphitheatre-like, around it. Prayers are offered by villagers, or substantial numbers of them, on New Year and on the 5th day of the 5th lunar month. In daily life, the spring is a favorite place for laundering and bathing.

There are three well gods in Hinatogawa, and they are worshipped at the three public wells scattered throughout the village. The people of the village, or large numbers of them, assemble at these wells for prayer at various times of the year, the most important being on New Year and on boat racing day. Sake and a box of candy are placed before the well as offerings of thanks for water.

This village has also a place for the worship of the sea god. This is a simple stone on a small shelf, on a barren spot of the seashore, scarcely distinguishable from the rocks scattered in natural disarray by the waves. In a high wind, the remains of the offerings and the charcoal sticks are swept out to sea. The most important observance here occurs on the 4th day of the 5th month, the day of the sea festival and the boat races. Fishermen come to the place by boat and make offerings of sharks' fins. On this day, the whole village assembles twice to pray at the spot, once before, and once after the races and the celebration. Individual or family worship is common on New Year and at O-Bon. On the equinoctial holiday of the full moon, the headman, the heads of the neighborhood groups, the council and retired elder men assemble, offer thanks and pray for continued plenty from the sea. Very close to the palace of the sea god, a short round stick of bamboo or of thick miscanthus may be stuck in a pile of rocks. Near the top, a dried fish (usually the ika) tail is placed in a slit. In the center there is a slit for another but larger part of the dried fish.

The palace of the mountain god, though its identity is uncertain, is near the palace of the sea god. It is under an overhanging rock along the seashore. This seems an unusual place for the home of a mountain god, but seafarers may have prayed to the god in thanks for guiding them safely in. It seems now to have fallen into disuse. It is now partially overgrown with pandanus and little is known of the place.

Matsuda. In Matsuda, there are beliefs in well, mountain top, and tree grove spirits. There are 8 wells here and family groups usually divide up and worship at one of the wells. After drinking some of the water, thanks are offered to the well god.

The gods of the mountain top and the tree groves are difficult to understand. Little seems to be known about them locally, and it is difficult to disengage historical from religious elements.

One popular explanation is that these gods were the intentional invention of Saion, the 18th century statesman and authority on forestry and agriculture. But this seems highly unlikely. It is more likely that Saion capitalised on the ancient interdict against cutting down

793 lives like other villagers, spending most of her time in the fields and around her home. She has children and grandchildren, but the father of her children no longer lives in Taira. She regards the continuation of the old ceremonies as her holy duty even though she has to do without most of the accustomed material support from the village and [358] in spite of disbelief and lack of participation. She has sought in vain [346] to have the village make necessary repairs on the simple village shrine near the township office and on the little hut where the ancestral tablets of her predecessors are kept.

793 While many of the former ceremonies have been discontinued, the 782 priestess is still called on to officiate at house-building ceremonies, to purify the lot, to offer prayers when the beams are raised, and to con- [342] duct the dedication when the house is finished. If the owner is mov- [776] ing out of an old house, the priestess notifies the fire deity so that he [778] will follow to the new abode. On other occasions the priestess conducts prayers at the village shrine or at one of the other sacred places near the village. Many of the prayers are succorant—requesting the aid and blessing of the gods in accomplishing a certain goal. In general, as Lebra has pointed out (1958), ceremonies of asking for help are more numerous and elaborate than thanksgiving ones.

[312] On New Year's morning the priestess prays at the water well. Since [178] so many ceremonies have been abbreviated and are no longer carried out in traditional detail, the priestess apologizes for short cuts in her prayers. If she fails to offer prayers in all prescribed spots, she pacifies [794] the deities by facing in the direction of the sacred place where the [787] ceremony should have been conducted. Although the priestess is clearly best qualified to enter into communication with the deities, many older women seem to possess such power also, and if the priestess' assistants are not present, another older woman can function as her helper.

782 For these ceremonies food for offerings is contributed by the village. 788 The priestess, in a white gown, kneels, flanked by her assistants, also [262] in white, in front of a tray of sake, rice, or other food for the deities. Charcoal incense sticks are burned while brief prayers asking the [533] deities for a successful crop, thanking them for a harvest, or whatever is appropriate to the occasion are mumbled. On certain occasions the women sing chants. After these ceremonies, the priestess, her assistants and the few others present, usually old women, share the food offerings.

796 One of the most dramatic ceremonies is held on Boat Race Day in 793 lunar June. Priestesses from several villages gather near Taira. During the ceremony the Taira priestess stands in the middle of a circle formed by the other priestesses and helpers, beating a drum as the

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
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women chant. The tempo becomes more and more frenzied, and at a certain moment a bell rings. Nobody knows who rings it, and no amount of questioning elicited any information other than that this was done by divine action.

Ancestral worship is equally important in the life of Taira people. Each house of an oldest son has a shelf with a shrine in the main living room. On this shelf the family keeps the ancestral tablets, each representing a deceased ancestor of a recent period. The tablets for whole family lines are kept on the shelves of the main houses. Through this system a family maintains continuity between the living and the dead. Although a deceased person is believed to become a buddha or a god who ascends to heaven, his presence is still felt by the living relatives. If they fail to make the required offerings on the first and fifteenth day of each lunar month, or otherwise neglect religious duties toward the ancestor, misfortune may come to the family. At the same time, the worship of common ancestors holds branches of the larger kin groups together.

No village adult died during our stay, but the funeral practices for adults described by Glacken (1955) and Pitts et al. (1955) for other villages in Okinawa are similar. Seven years is the age limit for a child burial, which is simple and does not require attendance of people other than immediate relatives and perhaps one or two neighbors.* During the study an 8-year-old boy died from an illness and was given a full funeral, which is similar to that of adults.

The funeral must take place at the first outgoing tide after the body has been prepared and dressed. Accompanied by family, residents of the ward, and mourners from other parts of the village whose number depends on the prominence of the dead, the body is carried on a simple, open litter to the tomb area just west of the central village (see map 2). Women feel free to show their emotions, while men remain outwardly calm. Until decomposition takes place, the body remains in a tomb used by the whole village for temporary entombment. Like other village ceremonies, funerals are less elaborate now than they once were, perhaps to the relief of all concerned, since death is highly anxiety provoking, and nobody feels comfortable during the prayers and the ritual farewell to the corpse at the tomb. The participants receive a cup of sake before leaving the tomb area to cleanse them of the pollution of death. Some people still prefer to return to the village by a different route so that the spirit of the dead person will be fooled and unable to follow.

* The reason for this is possibly that the younger child has not yet fulfilled his filial obligations.

757 [854] [164] [232] [578] frequently and may be repeated as many as four times during the first year of a child's life. An older child occasionally undergoes this treatment for a case of violent impetigo. Even a horse may be bled in this way for loss of appetite or other symptoms of disease.

A woman whose face had been struck in an unusual display of temper underwent a blood letting soon after a swelling appeared. Her neighbor from across the street, a farmer like everyone else, sterilized her cheek with iodine and then cut it with a razor until the blood flowed freely. After a night's rest, the woman appeared outside her house without any signs of swelling and seemingly recovered.

753 776 769 775 [764] As was pointed out previously, many diseases are believed to be caused by supernatural forces: the ancestor spirits, spirits of those who have just died, and natural deities and evil spirits who wander around at night. The ancestors expect proper respect and attention and in general are benevolent unless neglected. Spirits of those who have recently died are most dangerous if the deceased is from another village. For deceased villagers one is careful to purify oneself after the funeral. The doors of each house are shut at night to protect against the evil spirits of the night air. Disease is less frequently caused by natural deities who have been neglected or mistreated.

755 756 [787] In case of sickness or other unfortunate events in the family, somebody may go to consult the *yuta,* a shaman who communicates with the supernatural. She discovers the cause of misfortune with the help of rice oracles and through powers of divination received through visions and hallucinations. There is no *yuta* living in Taira now, so that people have to travel to the other side of the island, an hour or more on foot, if they want to learn about the source of some evil. Taira [769] people make many such trips to consult this shamanistic specialist. The most common cause of misfortune discovered by the *yuta* is neglect of ceremonies to the ancestral gods or, less frequently, the neglect of cere- [793] monies to the natural deities. Although the *yuta* stands in no direct connection with the high priestess, she may suggest that her client ask the priestess for special prayers to rectify the negligence. In such cases, then, the competence of individuals in the family may not be adequate to deal with the ancestral world, and the priestess enters into family religion.

597 755 769 [796] Some Taira parents still find an adoptive parent for a sickly child in the belief that his own ancestors have caused bad health, and that this can only be remedied by making a formal arrangement which transfers ancestral responsibility for the child to another family. The child remains with his own parents and only visits his foster parents during the New Year and the midsummer Buddhist *Bon* Festival, which honors ancestors, and perhaps at one or two other occasions during the year.

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
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parent aftereffects of remorse or physical incapacitation, is a characteristic of this village. Excessive or orgiastic feasting which might interfere with work duties of the following day or days is absent. Leisure events spent in groups are joyful and desirable to all, untinged by hidden motives of social compulsion or conformity, which marks so many recreational activities in a culture like ours.

The village calendar does not include a weekly rest day, although government offices are closed on Sunday. Rest and holidays for the majority of villagers are regulated by religious and agricultural events which, in former times, were observed at least once during each lunar month. Although some of these have been simplified or given up in recent times by people whose participation in the old religion has diminished or by those who seek a sounder economy by urging greater production of crops and accumulation of savings, when it comes to observing and enjoying holidays, even the most rational village leader forgets his concern for the time being. The elaborateness of celebrations may be less today, as a result of economic pressure, than in former times—the spirit hardly could be. To know and appreciate the sense of humor and the wit of the people, one has only to attend their parties. During other times these qualities are less expressed—though they are never completely absent. If the naive comment that Okinawans are "childlike"—an observation which Westerners in describing them have permitted themselves—can be taken to have any foundation in fact, it could only be that like many children they are capable of complete absorption and indulgence in fun when the occasion is proper. For the Taira person such indulgence cannot be achieved without food, drink, music, and dance. These are the main components of entertainment which help to elicit gaiety and good humor, whether during holidays observed by families in individual homes, or those of the descent group main houses, or in village-wide celebrations, which are extremely common. These ingredients also appear during more informal hours of relaxation, each day after work, when there are small gatherings here and there, though on a more modest scale.

Since calendrical holidays, whether of a family nature or community-wide, have many aspects in common, we may mention some of these in general. Most gatherings begin in the late afternoon and last until late at night although never until daybreak. These are the rare times when people can dress in their best clothes and by doing so shed, perhaps, symbolically all associations with everyday routine.

The sequence of events at any kind of celebration is somewhat like a veil dance during which one layer of formality after another disappears. A formal period precedes not only all village-wide celebrations

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
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would be nothing more uproarious than a group of singing celebrants seeking further entertainment from house to house. The occasional quarrels after drinking, which are mentioned elsewhere, seemed much more frequent where only a small group of men indulged after work, especially younger ones. No major holidays ended in dissonance.

The main events for family celebrations are lunar New Year, *seimei*, a period in spring during which descent group ancestors are revered and *Bon*, a commemoration of the dead in the fall. At these times families are reunited with relatives from other villages or the city. These events are observed in the home or in front of the ancestral tombs. During *Bon* young men and women go from house to house, performing traditional dances for this holiday in front of the assembled families.

Celebration of special birthday cycles and agricultural events, such as the day when ditches in the paddies were cleaned in former times, are observed by villagers as a group. An important religious event for the community is Boat Race Day in lunar June. On lunar August 15, the celebration of the full August moon, some villagers present stage performances and dances at a public celebration.

In general, it may be said that families gather as a unit on those days on which ancestors and deceased family members are commemorated. The village jointly celebrates events which are either based on local religion or on agricultural events. The only national holiday which is now in existence was established by the post-war Ryukyuan government. It is observed by school and government offices but not by the people.

Sport events form another category of holidays. The most important one falls in October when both in Japan and all over the Ryukyus athletes compete against each other. Athletic meets take place for several weeks; for the village the biggest event is the competition of all athletes in the township on *undokai* day. Everyone leaves work and takes picnic food to the track at the junior high school where each village competes against the others. This lasts all day.

Wrestling matches are part of entertainment during outdoor celebrations in the early summer. They are mainly an affair for young men. Occasionally an older man who feels strong enough challenges a younger one. The villagers sit around a large circle near the beach, watching the fights while they eat holiday food and drink sake. On Boat Race Day Taira and the neighboring village of Kawata race fishing canoes against each other. Spectators at this event are enthusiastic supporters of their favorites. After the races this holiday ends like any other, in celebrations with dance and drinking.

(mentioned previously), song, and the indigenous religion. Okinawan song and music undoubtedly exceed both Japanese and Western in popularity; in fact, no other facet of Okinawan culture has so successfully withstood the changes of the past seventy-five years. Songs such as the Kagiyadefu (which some Okinawans liken to a national anthem), Nubui Kuduchi, Hamachidori, Tanchame are known and loved by all. Some of the phonograph record stores in Naha carry as many as several hundred different recordings of Okinawan songs, and virtually all of these are recorded in Okinawan. All priestesses of the indigenous religion interviewed by the author stated that Okinawan was the language of prayer and ceremony; to some this was a burden, as in the case of one priestess who had spent most of her life in Japan. A few admitted that the language of the ceremonies and particularly that of the old songs or umui (sometime rendered omoro) was rather obscure and not fully understood; these are transmitted orally from the older priestess to her successor and undoubtedly contain many archaic words. Outside the formal religious structure yet inextricably linked to it are shamans (yuta) and fortune tellers ('ekisha'). The former, most often a woman, uses Okinawan almost exclusively in rites concerned with divining, exorcism, and curing. The latter, nearly always a male, is usually a fairly well-educated person, as the profession is based on interpretations of certain books used in conjunction with the ancient Chinese Book of Changes (I Ching), and either Japanese or Okinawan, depending on the customer, may be used in giving the reading. Both practitioners are extremely popular, but the fortune teller is usually found in the cities and towns whereas the shaman may be found in Naha or the smallest hamlet.

Japanese With the abdication of Shō Tai in 1879 the Japanese government initiated a program designed for integrating Okinawa into the national state as rapidly as possible. An effort was made to stamp out all vestiges of Okinawan culture, utilizing techniques ranging from education and indoctrination to repressive laws and police measures. Greatest emphasis was given to making Japanese speakers out of Okinawans. Leavenworth quotes Governor Narahara as stating that the creation of Japanese speakers was of more value than all the repressive laws prohibiting certain customs.[1] At the start the Japanese were hindered by a lack of schools and teachers, and so the program moved ahead slowly. An effective national school system covering the rural areas where the bulk of the population was located and taking in both sexes was not fully operative until about the time of World War I. The failure of Japanese to displace Okinawan can be attributed largely to a lack of time and a lack of facilities for education beyond the elementary level. By the time of World War II but two generations were schooled in Japanese, and the majority of these had received no more than six years of education.

Though Japanese failed to displace Okinawan, it did succeed in becoming a necessity in the lives of most people and in establishing itself as the prestige language. With the government, press, schools, cinema, radio, and high-level commerce utilizing Japanese exclusively, participation in modern life without a knowledge of Japanese became impossible. The incentives towards competence in Japanese were many, whereas there appeared to be little gained

[1] Leavenworth, 1905, p. 37.

613 southern part of the island. There the term for the local unit, a relatively small lineage with not very strong ties to the larger unit, is chuchooree (literally, "one brotherhood', to translate literally into Japanese, hito-
613 kyōdai). The larger unit of the commoners is called the ichimung ("one gate"),
614 which is equivalent to the munchu of the south. Some of the gentry families refer to the subdivision of the uji having the same surname as their ichimung. Thus a family may belong to a local chuchooree, to an ichimung containing other families elsewhere of the same surname, and to a still larger uji containing ichimung of other surnames.

614 Functions The functions of the common descent group seem to be almost
769 entirely ritual. Just as the members of a family are responsible for helping the head of the family in making the proper offerings before the tablets and the tomb of its immediate ancestors, so the larger unit has such a responsibility toward the remote ancestors. In the family the eldest son bears the greatest responsibility, so in the common descent group the head of the main house bears the greatest responsibility. But the benefits resulting from proper worship and the misfortunes resulting from negligence may extend even to the youngest branch house, and thus all are interested in maintaining the worship.

614 Representatives of the common descent group worship before the ances-
• 796 tral tablets at the main house on occasions called u-machii (J. 'o-matsuri'),
769 usually the 15th days of the 2nd, 5th and 6th lunar months and during the New Year's season. They worship at the tomb at the shiimii (J. 'seimei') season in April. For this purpose periodic meetings may be held and dues levied for
[789] the expense of the offerings. Many groups send members on pilgrimages every seventh year (shichinin-maari) to pray at remote shrines; many in the south go to Nakijin in the north for this. There may also be special expenditures such as for the repair of a tomb, the building of a new tomb, or even the repair of the main house if its owner has become impoverished.

614 A few common descent groups are said to have a little property from which the income is used for the expense of the worship, but probably none has enough to be of any other value. The common descent group probably has
[476] no economic functions. In a rural community its members may tend to cooperate a little more in farm work; I observed this to be the case in some instances in Yamada, but informants say that kinship is no more important than closeness of residence and that neighbors ought to cooperate.

614 Nevertheless the common descent group occasionally seems to have
666 political functions. In a recent election in southern Okinawa, munchu membership became a factor. A cartoon that appeared in the Okinawa Times of 8 March 1954 shows opposing candidates carrying banners announcing their munchu. In the village of Komesu, south of Itoman, supporters of candidates appealed to members of their candidates' munchu to support their own regardless of political party.

613 The unity of the kin group may appear in time of crisis. In the vil-
722 lage of Yamada, during the battle in 1945, many of the villagers hid out in improved natural caves. According to one informant's account, at first there was some moving around but ultimately people of the same chuchooree clung together. In one instance bad feeling arose between two groups over the sharing of a cave.

households. Noodles are another item of regular purchase. Starch and bean paste are typical items which formerly were always made in the home but now may be purchased instead. 178 262

In sum Okinawan diet has improved in quantity and variety. Food tastes are more catholic today; certain foreign foods are greatly appreciated. There is a greater reliance on manufactured and processed foods, and greater cash expenditures are made for food.

Entertainment and leisure There has been a marked decline in village celebrations and festivals in which all residents participate. Formerly O Bon, New Year's, and harvesting time were occasions for village-wide celebrations; today these are gone from most communities; celebrations are restricted to the family and friends. Most of the village celebrations were basically religious in nature and with the decline of the old religion these celebrations have been dropped. 527 796 178 621

Parties to mark an individual's change of status were formerly held on the 13th, 25th, 37th, 48th, 61st, 73rd, 85th, 88th and 97th birthdays, but today only those for the old people are observed. Frequently a party is held to mark an individual's success in the competitive examination to enter high school, but aside from that, rites of passage for the young and middle-aged are no longer observed. 527 178

The Japanese introduced one form of entertainment which has achieved immense popularity; this is a sporting event sponsored by the school. These are usually held on Sunday during the fall of the year, and usually the whole school participates. There is intra-school competition and later inter-school; intense interest is generated and often this becomes an important topic for conversation among the young men. 526 177

Local units of the national organizations such as the youths' association and the women's association frequently hold parties for their members. In fact these organizations are mainly of a social nature. 595

As noted above, prior to the war there were five motion picture theaters on Okinawa; today there are fifty-seven. American and European films constitute from one quarter to one third of the total shown. Though most of these theaters are located in the cities and towns, the young people of the nearby farming villages make frequent use of them. The popularity of the American "Western" among the young people has caused some to attribute juvenile delinquency to this, although the relatively more bloody Japanese sword-fighting pictures ('chambara') are considered harmless. 546 177

The popularity of Okinawan dancing and music seems undiminished. Radio broadcasts of Okinawan music are much enjoyed; and virtually every party provides the opportunity for music and dancing in which most of the guests participate. A few of the better-educated young people profess an appreciation of Western classical music and jazz, but most of them prefer Japanese and American love ballads though they still remain very fond of the Okinawan music. 533 535 177

582 178 average age at the time of marriage, investigation into the registries reveals that the range has narrowed somewhat. Formerly some girls married at thirteen and fourteen; today this would be considered rather unusual.

[177] The Japanese administration attempted to discourage endogamous marriage practices, particularly kin-group endogamy. All agreed that the practice has declined; yet in Kanegusuku nearly 50% of all marriages were within the kin group and 66% of all marriages were within the village. An analysis of these figures on an age basis indicates the practice is declining there.

833 178 833 Sex It is said that sexual standards have changed in that there is less sexual license among the young people and that they tend to have their first relations at a later age than formerly. This is attributed in part to the moral training of the schools. Another factor seems to be the general decline of several informal village institutions which permitted young people considerable sexual freedom. One informant stated that those who continue on to high school and university generally have their first experience at a later age than those who attend only junior high school.

642 177 641 [625] [667] Government The Japanese introduced a modern system of government, abolished the Okinawan aristocracy, and granted suffrage to all males of twenty-five or more years. The American Civil Administration has attempted to liberalize laws and to make possible a greater degree of self-government. Police powers have been limited, universal suffrage has been introduced, and the number of elected officials has been increased.

621 178 To date there has been little change within the village, where suffrage and office-holding remain limited to household heads. Villagers acknowledge that there is greater freedom for action at the local level today; yet they are not desirous of obtaining greater self-government. They feel that it would require too much of their time and that there is too little money available to finance its operation. Village leadership is virtually unchanged. Change where it has occurred has been initiated at a higher level.

632 178 At the township level the electorate has been broadened to include all persons, male and female, over twenty years of age. The mayor who was formerly appointed is now elected to office.

771 177 178 793 Religion There has been a general decline in the indigenous Okinawan religion, effected by Japanese policy, wartime attrition, and the spread of education. Formerly a hierarchy of priestesses extended from the kin group through the community and region to the person of the king's sister, the chief priestess. The Japanese removed the top echelons of this hierarchy, but the kin group and community priestesses continued to function. World War II resulted in the death of many religious functionaries, and as the office is usually hereditary within a specific family and often limited to a particular member of that family, there has often been no replacement for the office. Lastly there is an increasing tendency among the young people, due to the influence of the school, to regard religion as superstition.

796 178 Many villages, especially those without religious functionaries, have discontinued all village ceremonies, and in those few remarkable exceptions

where they are observed there are generally few participants. Also many ceremonies have lost all meaning save that of custom, which is considered sufficient reason for their observance. 796 o 178

The authors heard dissatisfaction expressed with regard to current funeral practices. At one bone-washing ceremony witnessed by the author, several of the men stated that the practice was pointless and should therefore cease. Statements favorable to the Japanese practice of cremation were frequently heard. 764 765 829

Urbanization Prior to Japanese annexation there existed a sharp urban-rural dichotomy in Okinawan culture. This might best be characterized as a rural peasantry and an urban gentry-nobility. The latter group was in contact with Japan and China and was literate, while the former was divided into many small, isolated villages, lived in a state of serfdom, and was largely uneducated. The urban culture was strongly influenced by its foreign contacts, but in the rural areas an indigenous culture was preserved virtually untouched by outside influences. 369 177 [565]

The Japanese impact was first felt in the urban areas, and the city of Naha gradually assumed the characteristics of a Japanese city. It became the center for the diffusion of things Japanese into the countryside. Despite a number of important changes---abolition of communal land tenure, introduction of private property, gradual penetration of a money economy, introduction of schools and national organizations---rural-urban differences remained strong. The character of the village tended to remain homogeneous and conservative, and contacts with the city were infrequent. When one emigrated from the village, the move usually was to a point outside the country rather than to another part of the island.

World War II shattered the isolation and homogeneity of the village. The American occupation coupled with the cumulative effect of the change initiated by the Japanese has served to bring the village into a closer relationship with the urban areas. The result has been the urbanization of the rural areas. By means of newspapers, motion pictures, and radio the villager has come to share the cultural life of the city. Rural-urban differences in diet, dress, education, entertainment, mobility, and values are tending to disappear. Marked improvements in transportation have given the villager a new mobility, enabling him to participate in the labor market of the city and giving new outlets for his products. The nature of the village is increasingly more heterogeneous due to the presence of newcomers, increased occupational specialization, and greater interaction with the outside world. There is a greater reliance on goods produced by industrial society, and a number of villagers commute daily to a place of employment in the city or in nearby military installations. The trend is toward an ultimate disappearance of rural-urban differences; the process is one that is well advanced in the United States, but in Okinawa it is in an early stage. 369 177 178 621

Conclusion Okinawa has been in a process of change for over fifty years. World War II and the American military occupation have served to accelerate greatly the forces for change. Despite this, Okinawan culture has not been overwhelmed and has managed to preserve its identity. A number of 177 178